

Last month the JOURNAL referred to the pamphlet issued by the Marine Hospital Service on the subject of the new Pharmacopeia. We wish again to refer to **WHAT'S IN A NAME?** the same document, and call attention to another group of remedies

about which there seems to be a considerable amount of confusion in the physician's mind. At page 40 of this official document we find "Hexamethylenamina," the new Pharmacopeial name for hexamethylene-tetramine, and we read that it is "also known as *aminoform*, *ammonio-formaldehyde*, *cystamine*, *cystogen*, *formin*, *uritone* and *urotropin*"; at least two more may be added—*hexa-cystine* and *formamine*. In other words, we are informed by this official document, that all of these fancifully named remedies are one and the same chemical—hexamethylene-tetramine — and that whether you write for urotropin, formin, cystogen or any other of these names is immaterial; your patient will take the chemical, hexamethylene-tetramine. A serious objection has been urged to the new Pharmacopeial name given to this chemical; it is too long to be remembered, and cannot well be abbreviated without danger of confusion. The objections are reasonably good, but they do not apply to a simple abbreviation of the chemical name—*hexam.-tet.* The chemical name so abbreviated is easy to remember, is definitely descriptive, is not at all liable to be confused with any other abbreviation, and should be generally used. Just so long as physicians will continue to prescribe this chemical under its various fanciful names, just so long will they continue to indicate their own ignorance of their materia medica and their superlative faith in the prejudiced statements of the various detail men. And moreover, just so long will they continue to make the pharmacist pay a high price for medical ignorance, for they will continue to compel him to carry in stock a number of trade-brands of the same identical chemical. Is that right? It has been urged that the trade name given to a remedy of this sort by the manufacturer first introducing it should be used exclusively, so that he might get the benefit of his outlay in time and money in perfecting the discovery. There is certainly some justice in this claim, and it could be conceded were it not for the practices of manufacturers themselves. One of them will discover and introduce a chemical of this sort, and it will soon be found to have certain valuable medicinal properties. Immediately a number of other manufacturers will make the same thing, and market it each under a different and also fanciful name, and each claim that his preparation has distinct and unique qualities not possessed by any other substance under heaven. If they were content to market their products under definite and recognized names—either chemical or arbitrary names—and to depend for sales upon the quality of the goods, reputation of the manufacturer, price of the product, etc., all would be well. But this they do not do, and consequently there seems to be no honorable course open to the conscientious physician

save to disregard them all and prescribe the remedy under its pharmacopeial or chemical name; in this particular instance *hexam.-tet.* would seem to be the easiest, and it certainly is as short and as easily remembered as any of the trade names under which the chemical is marketed. Why not follow the Pharmacopeia for a while and see how it works?

From present indications the 17th edition of the Official Register and Directory of Physicians

#### OFFICIAL REGISTER.

will be distributed during this month of October. During the past year every effort has been made to correct the data contained in the book and to bring the addresses up to date, yet there are still a considerable number of names in the "address unknown" list. Once more we earnestly call upon each and every member of the Society to aid us in this work and to keep us posted as to the movements of physicians. If a doctor moves into your vicinity, let us know about it; it will take only a few seconds of your time, and it will make the Register just so much more useful and valuable. Please look through the "address unknown" list and advise us at once if you know the present correct address of any physicians in that list. Remember that this Register, like the JOURNAL, is your own property, and that as such you should take an interest in it and endeavor to aid us in making it accurate. Criticisms and suggestions are more than welcome—they are desired. The general scheme of last year has been followed in the present volume, and seems to satisfy all practical demands. If you do not receive your Register by the early part of November, let us know.

There is an exactness of diction and an accuracy in the observance of all superficial things

#### A LAST WORD ON ACCURACY.

in life which to some people is all important. Thus we see our amiable friend Mr. Rockefeller observe with a marvelous degree of exactness all the outward and visible ordinances of the religion which he professes, while at the same time he is reported to regard it as a crime to himself if he allows the victim of a business deal to escape with a single dollar that might have been extracted. One may also read learned and scholarly editorials in some medical journals, defining exactly the meaning of a Greek root, or setting forth with commendable accuracy those things which fall within "commercialism" and those characteristics of pure "professionalism"—and in the same journal discover that "professionalism" has been seduced by "commercialism," and that its advertising pages help to promote the use of such things as *chionia*; *ergoapiol*; *antikamnia*, etc. But this exact adherence to the letter and absolute disregard of the spirit of the law, does not appeal to us. Your JOURNAL, under the guidance of your Publication Committee, began an active war against certain well-defined abuses

which have crept into the medical profession, and so far as we are aware, the principle actuating us has been conscientiously lived up to. The verbiage of one or two of our criticisms has been questioned, and the cry of "inaccuracy" raised, much to the delight of some of the smaller journals, probably "published for profit and not for the profession." If there has been any error in the principle, we have thus far failed to have it called to our attention. Abusive adjectives are not arguments, and there is too much real work to do to pay any particular attention either to them or to thinly veiled insinuations of improper motives. Time will settle many questions, and we are quite willing to let the problem of motives await its solution in due course; some people are so constructed that they cannot believe the truth.

---

Elsewhere in this number of the JOURNAL will be found the address of Dr. Morrison, read before the meeting of the Railway Surgeons' Association. It is to be commended for its excellent suggestions, particularly in the matter of frequent examination of water supply and conservatism in emergency surgery. It is certainly cheaper and easier to head off an epidemic than to subsequently discover its cause and stamp it out. The railway surgeon must often face conditions that are very perplexing and that tax his judgment to the extreme, and in just these conditions will the suggestion of conservatism offered by Dr. Morrison be of very great value. Not infrequently more strength is required to leave an injury alone than to operate immediately; but the final result may not be so satisfactory, so far as the wage-earning individual is concerned.

---

The investigations now under way in New York are very decidedly illuminating the inside manipulations of the big insurance companies. It is particularly interesting to note that no word of possible criticism attaches to the name of any medical director or employee. Indeed, quite the contrary, for it becomes more and more evident that these companies are well able to pay a decent fee for examinations, and this fact seems to be dawning upon the editorial intelligence of a number of medical journals about the country. It is a rank injustice that physicians should be paid less than \$5.00 for any examination, only that the few dollars thus saved may be added to the enormous sums of hoarded wealth which are kept on hand in New York for the purpose of manipulating Wall street and floating "undigested" securities. Keep pegging away at this question of cheap fees and eventually we shall see the time when the minimum fee will be \$5.00—as it should. Talk to your friends—against these cheap-fee companies; when possible, persuade them to take out their insurance in some one of the numerous good and sound companies that pay decent fees for careful

work. Let them know that a company paying for a cheap examination is going to get cheap, and to that extent unreliable, work, and that such work is a danger to the company, in the long run. If possible, refuse to make any examination for less than \$5.00, even if the agent does get mad and swear a little because he may have to pay the extra \$2.00 himself; it won't hurt him and the time required to make a thorough examination is worth \$5.00, or it is worth nothing. We can do a lot toward bringing about this reform if we will but keep at it; keep talking; keep refusing to make cheap examinations; keep explaining to prospective insurers what it means and how the big ones are gathering enormous cash reserves—partly at your expense. They can afford to pay \$80,000.00 salaries, but cannot afford to pay \$5.00 examinations.

---

The secretary desires to call the attention of members to the fact that the office of the Society, in the Y. M. C. A. Building, San Francisco, could possibly be of service more often than it is, if they would but use it as a sort of "clearing house." For instance, it very frequently happens that nurses desiring hospital appointments, or general work, apply to the secretary; we also have noted two or three stenographers who are perfectly competent to take medical dictation. Physicians desiring to go away for a time and who have no one at hand to take care of their work, could often be placed in communication with men who would be glad of the change and who would like the opportunity of thus substituting for the absentee. Furthermore, a number of the hospitals in San Francisco are now regularly notifying the office of the time of operations to be performed, and all visiting physicians are cordially welcome to attend such operations. A little coöperation, a little more effort to center these various lines of interest in the office of the Society, will very soon be found to largely effect the convenience of all.

---

Not a month and scarcely a week goes by that does not see some member of the Society come to the office and ask about a suitable location, or inquire whether we know of any one who wants to buy a practice or secure a location. Very frequently we are asked about office rooms and just at the present time we have on file a memorandum relating to some offices in San Francisco that could be obtained by an oculist and aurist to very good advantage. We also know of several locations which are for sale. It is no trouble to attend to these things, though doubtless some members are restrained from applying to the office for information under the mistaken belief that it is a bother to the secretary. The office of the Society should be a sort of central exchange for just such things and the secretary trusts that the members will so regard it and will not hesitate to apply for information from time to time.